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make such an index will take three weeks of somebody's time, but it will double the value of the book.

And now our complaints and demands are recorded, and it remains only to say how good a book it is: how sound and sensible the criticisms, how useful the historical *résumés*, how full the references to books treating of the different sculptures, and to photographs and prints representing them. There is no book in all the library more needed by the student of classic sculpture: and what classic sculpture is, what part it plays, in the world of classic life and thought, it is fortunately no longer necessary to say.

RUSSELL STURGIS.

New York City.

THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT by ALFRED J. BUTLER, M. A., F.S. A., Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford. In two volumes, 8vo: I, pp. xx-377; II, pp. 409. Oxford, 1884, Clarendon Press.

Though issued in 1884, the importance of the book before us is so capital that an introduction of it to American readers is quite warranted, even at this late day. It is a pioneer book; the first yet written on "a great subject—the Christian antiquities of Egypt." Many were the difficulties to be overcome: a strange language; ignorance and indifference in the natives; an entire absence of monumental or documentary evidence,—these are but a part of the obstacles encountered by Mr. Butler in his voyage of discovery. Early Western Christianity is our natural inheritance, and we know it well. The Greek Church—its art and ecclesiastical antiquities—has been comparatively accessible and a subject of study for many generations. The Christian development in Syria and in Asia Minor has been a later stage in our scientific pilgrimage: only in late years have we become acquainted with the grand but ruined cities of Syria, deserted since the Mohammedan invasion in the seventh century; and with the relics of the earliest Christian settlement in the land where St. Paul first spread the light of the Gospel. The circle was then complete, with one notable exception: Christian Egypt was still a *terra incognita*. To any one familiar with Church history it seems very strange that what was once the most fanatically Christian of all converted lands, the centre of early Christian learning, the originator of monasticism, the home of Clement and Origen, of Cyrill and Athanasius and Arius, should not have been long ago diligently investigated by the historian and the archaeologist.

Asia Minor, Syria and a great part of the ancient domain of the Greek Church have been almost entirely converted to Mohammedanism, but the

Copts of Egypt still retain the faith, customs and ritual of their ancestors, and still worship in the churches and dwell in the monasteries founded under Constantine the Great and his successors. This is what Mr. Butler has undertaken to set before us in these two volumes, as "the result of seven months' research in Egypt." We must thank him for undertaking so laborious a task though he shrank from it, feeling "the lack of special training"—a lack which, though sometimes apparent, is counterbalanced by faithful and thorough work.

The first volume is entirely devoted to monumental antiquities: to a minute description of the early churches in Old and New Cairo and in the monasteries of the Natrun Valley and of Upper Egypt. Chapter I is "On the structure of Coptic Churches in general," preceded by some remarks on the origin of the Christian basilica, which will be noticed later. Though most of the churches of Egypt, the author says, "may be roughly termed basilican, it remains to notice a subordinate though powerful influence of another kind, which, for want of a better name, must be called Byzantine." The main effect of this influence is the dome, which is found in all Coptic churches; but "there is not a single specimen of purely Byzantine architecture," and no example of a cruciform ground-plan. "It would be less difficult, though not easy, to find an instance of a purely basilican church." The influence of the Latin (or basilican) style is found especially in the wooden architraves which are used to separate the nave from the aisles. The necessity for strengthening this weak architrave, to resist the pressure of the main wall above, led to the development of an architectural feature peculiar to Egypt—the relieving arch, placed above the architrave between every column. These arches were originally a part of the solid wall, and in this stage we find them used in the Latin basilicas of the West, where they were probably a Roman inheritance. But later, to secure superior lightness of structure, these arches were made free, the architrave was made of wood, and in this stage they were adopted by the Mohammedan invaders. There are also some interesting peculiarities in the construction and grouping of the domes: many churches had but one large dome over the sanctuary, with smaller ones, perhaps, over the side-apses; a second large class had many domes, sometimes twelve. In one case (Dair-as-Sûriâni) the central dome is supported on the two sides by a semi-dome, reminding one of Santa Sophia at Constantinople, while in another (Bûsh) there are four semi-domes. But it would be impossible in these few lines to detail the characteristics of these unique Coptic churches built between the sixth and the tenth centuries. Mr. Butler takes us through the narrow lanes of Cairo, past the mazes of picturesque groups of buildings in whose midst the old churches lie enshrouded and unnoticed. Nothing attracts the antiquarian or the spoiler in their shapeless exterior, which, when not entirely hidden,

shows but a plain uninterrupted wall, unbroken by windows, unmarked by towers, where even the summits of the domes are embedded in the square mass. Entering at the west end, through the narthex, the contrast of the deep gloom with the bright sunlight without is startling. The dim light shows a most picturesque interior. There are no broad sweeps of architectural lines as in our western cathedrals, no beautiful sculptured details, no grace and symmetry of lines: the screens separating the rear, where the females of the congregation are placed, from the front reserved for the males; the second screen dividing the latter from the choir, and the third the choir from the chancel: all this divides the interior into many sections. It is only on looking up at the gallery placed above the colonnade of the nave that the eye can follow a continuous line of vision. But the charm of the Coptic church lies in the beauty and exquisite finish of its interior details,—the carving and inlaid work of its high screens, in ivory, cedar and ebony; the mosaics, in marbles and mother-of-pearl, of the sanctuary and the ambon; the frescos on the walls, and the rows of small panel paintings in which the Coptic artist excelled. I cannot do better than quote the description of one of these unique screens: “The choir-screen is worth a journey to Egypt to see. It is a massive partition of ebony, divided into three large panels [six ft. by eight]—doorway and two side panels—which are framed in masonry. . . In the centre [of each] a double door, opening choirwards, is covered with elaborate mouldings, enclosing ivory crosses carved in high relief. All round the framing of the doors tablets of solid ivory chased with arabesques are inset, and the topmost part of each panel is marked off for an even richer display of chased tablets and crosses. Each of the side-panels of the screen is one mass of superbly cut crosses of ivory, inlaid in even lines, so as to form a kind of broken trellis-work in the ebony background. The spaces between the crosses are filled with little squares, pentagons, hexagons, and other figures of ivory, variously designed, and chiselled with exquisite skill. . . It is difficult to give any idea of the extraordinary richness and delicacy of the details or the splendor of the whole effect. The priest told me that this screen was 953 years old, *i. e.* dates from 927 A. D., which seems to be the year of the church’s foundation” (church of *Dair-s-Sifain*, I, 86–87).

Most picturesque of all is the group of churches inclosed within the ancient Roman fortress of Babylon, to which the author devoted a great amount of study, in tracing the walls and examining their fine circular towers. On the summit of one old tower stands the church of St. George. Perched between two of the old Roman bastions, high up in the air, on a platform planted with palm-trees and aloes, is the suspended church called *El Mo‘allaqah*, the earliest and most interesting of the Christian buildings of Cairo, and the nearest approach to the type of the basilica. Would not

an examination of the ground-plan lead to the conjecture that the three pointed arches, separating what he terms the "nave" and the north aisle, were a later addition?

In the latter part of the first volume Mr. Butler takes us to the monasteries of the Libyan desert, in the Natrun Valley, which go back to early Christian times, when the whole of Egypt was peopled with monastic institutions. Here only four remain: the rest, either have been swallowed up in the sands, or still show, by shattered ruins, the sites they once occupied. From those that are still standing came the precious series of Syriac manuscripts which compose the collections of the Vatican and the British Museum. Mr. Butler says of one, Dair Macarius (and all are built on the same model), "The monastery is a veritable fortress, standing about one hundred and fifty yards square with blind lofty walls rising sheer out of the sand:" there is "a large keep or tower, standing four-square, and approached only by a drawbridge. The tower contains the library, store-rooms," etc. The walls "enclose one principal and one or two smaller courtyards, around which stand the cells of the monks, domestic buildings . . . and the churches." Among the many ways in which these monastic churches differ from those of Cairo are the use of pointed arches and piers, instead of the flat architrave and columns, to separate the nave from the aisles, and the use of the pointed-arched tunnel-vaulting for the nave and aisles. The domes are larger, and the churches better lighted and of greater size.

The last chapters are devoted to "The churches of Upper Egypt," a group "still almost absolutely unexplored," and which Mr. Butler, not being able to visit in person, describes briefly from the scanty notes of other travellers. This is the more unfortunate, that the churches of the White and Red Monasteries, and many others, date evidently from the period before and during the reign of Constantine, and are magnificent examples of the architecture of the fourth century. Others, like those of Nagâdah, are probably the best specimens of Byzantine architecture in Egypt.

The second volume deals exclusively with ecclesiastical archæology and liturgy; with all details of church furniture and ornaments, of ecclesiastical vestments, of language and literature, of the sacraments and other rites and ceremonies. At the end, a collection of lives of the Saints is translated, thus helping the reader to understand many of the subjects of the paintings that fill the churches. Of the frescos we read that not one "has a date clearly fixed by an inscription or other evidence: yet several of them cannot be later than the eighth century, and some original frescos remain from the day of Constantine" (II, p. 85). That these are often remarkable works, we gather from the writer's remarks on those in the

church of one of the Natrun monasteries (Anba Bishôî): "they are clear and strong in design, true in drawing, rich and mellow in tone, and, in a word, worthy of the church which they adorn, and of comparison with any like work in Europe" (I, p. 323). Mr. Butler found the paintings, even those of a late period, quite free from the hieratic stiffness and the uniformity of composition and design which invaded Byzantine art. The chapters on church furniture include the description of many works which show that the Copts preserved artistic taste and skill in all branches of art up to a very late date—perhaps to the fifteenth century. The study of Coptic liturgy leads to interesting comparisons with other Oriental liturgies, and especially with that of the Church of England, by contrast with which Mr. Butler wishes to emphasize the great deviations from primitive liturgical forms that have crept into the Episcopal Church. The forms of ecclesiastical vestments and the changes in them are investigated, and the truth disengaged with considerable felicity from a mass of conflicting testimony. But on this part we need not dwell in detail, as it is rather outside our province.

From the preceding summary the value of the work accomplished by Mr. Butler is evident: but only one who has read his book can realize how opportune it is, in view of the invasion of the mania for restoration and novelty which always accompanies, in the East, a European occupation. Very soon the old frescos will be whitewashed, the sculptured screens of ebony and ivory thrown into a corner, while brand-new glass lamps will take the place of the mediæval Venetian glass or chased metal burners. Mr. Butler's minute description of even the smallest panel painting will then become a valuable document. It is deeply to be regretted that no views of any of the interiors of churches are given, for word-painting at the best is very insufficient in matters of art, and a ground-plan, though useful, has no style. It is to be hoped that photographs may soon be obtained wherever the light makes it possible—as in the churches of the Natrun monasteries.

A few criticisms may not be out of place, especially as a new edition is to be hoped for, in which some of the interesting monuments of Upper Egypt may receive a more adequate description. There is a feeling that, throughout the book, the antiquity of everything—churches, paintings, carvings, embroideries, inlaid-work—is over-estimated, without any reasons being given for such opinions. This leads the writer, for example, to make the untenable suggestion of the Egyptian origin of the Byzantine dome, though he does not bring forward any example in Egypt anterior to the domes of Central Syria (512–14), much less to those in the early Christian buildings of Asia Minor: the connection between the early Christian dome and anterior processes, if it exists, would seem to be with the Sassanid domes

of Persian palaces. The earliest domes of Coptic churches appear to be considerably later than Santa Sophia in Constantinople, while the many-domed churches of Egypt must belong to an even more advanced period.

Very hazardous are the writer's remarks on the origin of the Christian basilica: it cannot but be evident that his acquaintance with the latest literature on the subject is insufficient. He even seems to partly misunderstand Mr. Gilbert Scott, his main authority, confusing the latter's two types of early churches, the oratory and the basilica. He fails to notice the view, now most generally accepted, that the connection is not between the Christian basilica and the public Roman basilica, but between it and the private basilica of the Greco-Roman house; also the important elements from the Judeo-Greek Synagogue and the primitive Chapels of the Catacombs. A longer study of Early Christian architecture in its various phases would have made Mr. Butler's work more useful to the art-historian. To give an instance: the questions of the construction and supports of the dome, and of the use of the pointed arch are not even referred to; yet the former would probably settle the age and relative position of the Coptic dome, and the latter might decide one of the most burning architectural questions of the day, the origin of the pointed arch. We have long heard rumors of its use in early Egyptian churches, and it seemed probable that the great pointed arches of the Mosque of Ibn Tulûn (ix cent.), hitherto regarded as one of the earliest examples, were merely the work of Coptic artists who followed, in this instance, a long-established tradition. With this in mind, it is somewhat unsatisfactory to find that, in his description of Cairene architecture, the writer often refers to an arch without mentioning its form, and, in speaking of pointed relieving arches over architraves, adds no word to indicate whether or not they seem part of the original construction. In discussing the question of the relative age of single and triple apses in early churches, Mr. Butler fails to recognize the relation of the two early closed chambers of the III and IV centuries, one on either side of the church, with the late open side-apses into which they passed by a process of transition which, though not uniform, can be followed in buildings of both the East and the West. The account (I, p. 21) of the different position of men and women in churches, is not as clear as if the distinct difference between the Eastern and Western churches had been recognized: that the Western basilica as a rule has no gallery, but that the men were placed in the right aisle and the women in the left, curtains being drawn so as to separate the sexes completely; and that the use of the gallery for the women was an Eastern custom, and had considerable influence on the architectural form of the church.

The mosaics of small marble cubes which adorn the lower part of the niche in the sanctuaries of many Coptic churches are rightly admired by

Mr. Butler, but, in wishing to explain why the Coptic artists used only geometric designs, he falls into a singular error: he thinks the reason to be that they knew that the heavy marble cubes were not adapted to the reproduction of the human figure, whereas in the figured Byzantine mosaics the artificial cubes were so adapted. In the history of mosaic-painting it is clear, on the contrary, that at first marble cubes were used, even in elaborate wall-mosaics filled with figures, sometimes quite minute, as at Santa Pudentiana and Santa Costanza in Rome, and at S. Aquilino in Milan (iv and v centuries). Only when the supply of these imported colored marbles was well-nigh exhausted, through the growing popularity of mosaic-painting, were the cubes of glass and composition brought into exclusive use. As an instance of what would seem to be far too early an attribution, I may cite the wood-carvings of Abu Sardjah (I, p. 191) which he dates from the VIII century, while the illustration given of them would point to a period four or five hundred years later. In comparing the subjects figured in Coptic art (II, pp. 91-2) with those of the West and the Byzantine Empire, two errors should be noted. First, he remarks that the subject of the Good Shepherd and the Christian symbols of the fish, the anchor, etc., are not to be found. Of course not: they were used mainly in the Catacombs, and had ceased to be represented in any part of the Christian world before the first known works of Coptic art were produced. Mr. Butler is also unjust to Byzantine art. In remarking on the variety to be found in Coptic paintings, he says: "Coptic art seems never to have been tied and bound by rigid laws of tradition in the same manner as the art of the Greek Church. There is no analogy in Cairo to the experience of Didron, who fifty years ago saw the monks of Mount Athos reproducing by rule of thumb the designs and colours of the fourth or fifth century." If the writer had remembered that the *Guide de la Peinture* used by these monks belonged to the *fifteenth* century, he would not have committed an anachronism of some thousand years. But, seriously, any one familiar with Byzantine art knows what a precious Christian-classic inheritance it preserved for many centuries, and what works of beauty it produced in the time of Justinian and even under Basil the Macedonian (ix cent.), when the classic revival in Eastern art took place.

It is to be hoped that, in preparing a second edition, the writer will avail himself of the services of some Orientalist, in order that his book may profit by the additions which this would render possible. There is one class of documents in particular which ought to be consulted: I mean the Syriac manuscripts. The great proportion, as is well known, come from the monasteries of the Natrun Valley, and contain precious indications for both history and liturgy. In the Syrian historians, John of Asia, Zacharias Rhetor, and Dionysios of Tellmahré, there is a great store of informa-

tion regarding the ecclesiastical history of Egypt. The relations between Syria and Egypt would be a most interesting theme: we know that Pantænus, the master of Clement at Alexandria, was a Syrian, probably from Edessa, and this is but an instance of the intimate connection between the two, of which a later one is the persistence of these colonies of Syrian monks in the Natrun desert for many centuries after the conquest, and almost to modern times. It is very probable that the late find of Fayûm Papyri, now in Vienna, in which is included a series of documents extending over the entire Roman, Byzantine, and early Arabian periods, up to the tenth century, when the library was buried, will throw a flood of light on that most obscure period of the history of Egypt. It is useless to add that an examination of Arabian writers is indispensable, especially the numerous historians of Egyptian affairs. It would be very useful if, in the chapter on legends, notes were added, referring to the Ethiopic, Syriac and Arabic versions of the same, and especially to the Greek or Latin originals of the "Acts of martyrs" which appear in so debased a form in Coptic documents. Finally, does it not seem as if undue prominence were given to the liturgy of the Anglican Church? In a work which does not profess to be polemical, these digressions seem out of keeping.

There are some errors in Arabic words, of which examples taken at random are given in a note:¹ the missprints are very few, but there are other errors the character of which is doubtful; these and others will also be relegated to the notes.²

¹ Mr. Butler's transliteration of Arabic words is sometimes incorrect: *e. g.* his Abu Sargah (I, 181, *passim*) with a hard *g* should be Abu Sardjah; the soft letter *ḡal* or *dhal*, as in *El-Adhra* (I, 272, *passim*), he transliterates by a hard *d* which properly represents the letter *ḡad*. An error of another kind occurs in the frequently mentioned name of the Roman fortress of Babylon, which he transliterates "Kasr-ash-Shamm'ah" with an impossible doubling of the *m*. The derivation of a number of technical terms is sometimes omitted, sometimes incorrect. In II, p. 117, the Arabic word for amice *ṭailasdn* should have been compared with the Persian original, to which the Syriac word *ṭishang* (*cf. ṭaleshna*) approaches even more nearly. An amusing blunder occurs in I, 146, in quoting three lines of an Arabic inscription in which occurs the word "*naiah*" (imperative of *nāha*) with the meaning "give rest" (to their souls). Though the idea of rest was connected with that of decease through all the Christian world and in every language, Mr. Butler thinks it a proof that the church was built by a patriarch! II, 190, *estla* = *στολή*, "*stola*": *shoshippa* and Denzinger's *seiuscejo*, are the same word, a fact which Butler does not seem to recognize; it is a good Syriac word used several times in the Syriac Bible. II, 127: the derivation of *batrashil* from the Greek *ἐπιτραχήλιον* is questionable, though that from *πετροέλιον* (Dozy, *Suppl. aux dict. Arabes*), however enticing philologically speaking, is unlikely.

² Vol. II, p. 124 for *zinnār* read *zunnr*; p. 323 for *az-zabdjah* read *az-zaudjah* (matrimony); p. 378 for *Mortomariam* read *Maratmiriam* (as name of the Virgin); for

For a work which covers so much unexplored ground, the blemishes are of small consequence, and the good qualities far more noticeable. If we have given a different impression it has not been our intention. *Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* cannot fail to remain the standard, even if, as we hope, it be followed by many other works in the same field. Mr. Butler has shown the way, and all can now see what should be done as the next step. To use his own words: "Enough has been said . . . to show what work must yet be done in order to give the world anything like a complete account of the Christian antiquities of Egypt. Remains so vast in extent, so venerable in years, so unique in character, so rich in known and unknown possibilities of interest, are surely as well worthy of research and exploration as the colossal monuments of pagan Egypt."

A. L. FROTHINGHAM, JR.

RECENT FURTHER EXCAVATIONS OF THE MEGALITHIC ANTIQUITIES OF "HAGIAR-KĪM," MALTA, by DR. A. A. CARUANA. Imp. fol. pp. 11, with 7 full-size lithographic plates: Malta, 1886, Government Printing Office.

Dr. Caruana's memoir treats mainly of that imposing work of Cyclopean art known as the *Hagiar-Kīm* (*i. e.*, the Stones of Worship or Veneration), and includes seven large tinted plates and a descriptive text. *Hagiar-Kīm* is $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Valletta, within the district of Krendi, rich in megalithic remains, mostly underground. This was, undoubtedly, one of the largest centres of habitation in Malta in prehistoric times, and, probably, the site of the original Phœnician capital of Melita, which, perishing, left its record in the name *Hal-Kbīr*—"Great town." The valuable results of Dr. Caruana's latest survey, carried on under the direction of the Governor of these islands, are embodied in this monograph, which presents the most exhaustive account of *Hagiar-Kīm* yet given. We now know the configuration, primitive boundaries and extent of these remains, and possess full particulars for critical and historical inquiry. A scheme of systematic and gradual exploration of all the antiquities of Malta is countenanced by the local Government, and may be partially carried out, though the movement seems to lack the energy that the work demands. Dr. Caruana says that, though despoiled and neglected, some of these works of Maltese Cyclopean art might be made, with a little skilful restoration, to look almost as complete as when first erected.

Perusia read Perugia; for Vienna read Vienne, for *sotteranea* read *sotterranea* (throughout the book, as title of De Rossi's work), *etc.*